

# Urban and Community Forestry Program 2010 Accomplishment Report – Wisconsin

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## Introduction

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) urban forestry program is to encourage, enable, and enhance sound management of Wisconsin's urban forest ecosystems. The WDNR provides urban forestry technical, financial, and promotional assistance to local and tribal governments along with nonprofit organizations through its Urban Forestry Working Group (UFWG). Led by a State coordinator, a grant manager, six regional coordinators, and six half-time specialists (three are currently vacant), statewide policy development and implementation are managed with a team approach in partnership with the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council (WUFC).

## Critical Issues and Key Accomplishments

### Emerald Ash Borer

There have been multiple emerald ash borer (EAB) finds in Wisconsin since the first find on July 29, 2008. At this time quarantines are in effect for 11 counties in 3 WDNR Regions. Prior to the finds, the Urban Forestry Working Group focused efforts on EAB-related issues, and that work continues. Examples of these efforts follow.

Urban ash management guidelines were developed by an EAB Urban Ash Management Panel that included members from the WDNR; Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP); University of Wisconsin; municipal government; and the arboriculture and nursery industry. Panel members continue to work together as feedback is received and improvements are made to keep the information current. The urban ash management guidelines are on-line at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/pdf/ManagingUrbanAsh8-3-10.pdf>. The document is also posted on the EAB portal at <http://www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov/> and on the EAB Information for Municipalities Web site at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/eab.html>. These Web sites provide easy access to information, tools, and guidance to better serve our communities and the urban forest.

In August 2009, WDNR and DATCP staff presented to a group of over 70 mayors and administrators at the League of Wisconsin Municipalities Executive Workshop. Attendees learned about the history and regulatory actions that can be taken in regards to EAB. Municipalities were strongly encouraged to practice proactive tree management to prepare for EAB infestation by inventorying their ash tree population. This inventory would provide information about the number, size, and condition of their ash trees as well as the costs to treat, remove, and replace this typically substantial component of their street and park tree populations. The attendees also received information on the assistance that the WDNR and DATCP can provide for municipal staff.

Two EAB Municipal Utilization Workshops were conducted—one in the city of West Bend (October 2009) and one in the city of Madison (March 2010). Over 130 municipal arborists, foresters, and managers participated in the workshops with speakers from the DATCP; Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.; WDNR; University of Wisconsin; wood processors; and municipalities. Participants learned about harvesting techniques and options for wood marketing and utilization, and received EAB population and regulation updates.



An EAB Municipal Utilization Workshop was held in Dane County.

### **Urban Forestry Advocacy**

The Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council is an advisory committee consisting of 21 representatives from the green industry, government agencies, municipalities, and nonprofit and trade organizations. At the invitation of Assembly Representative Fred Clark, the Urban Forestry Council investigated inclusion of urban forestry into AB 649 – Climate Change legislation. After meeting with DNR staff from Land Use/ Planning, two potential amendments were identified. One was forwarded by Representative Clark to the bill sponsor and one was tabled until bill passage and inclusion in the ruling making process.

Unfortunately, action on the bill did not occur before the end of session and the bill died. Although the bill did not come to a vote, this was a landmark action for the Council and urban forestry to be included in legislation consideration.

In response to the new grant-making processes associated with U.S. Forest Service grants, the Council supports the *Forestry Ideas Start Here* (FISH) initiative, which will facilitate identification of statewide and regional urban forestry issues and the nurturing of networks and partnerships, resulting in potential collaborative projects that can be readily transformed into successful U.S. Forest Service grant proposals.

The Urban Forestry Council continues to be an active participant in the Forestry Assessment and Statewide Forest Strategy process. Further information on the Urban Forestry Council is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/council/>.

### **WDNR Urban Forestry Grant Program**

A primary goal of the Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry (UF) Program is to help communities start and develop their own sustainable urban and community forest management programs. The WDNR UF Grant Program provides two levels of funding: Regular and Start Up. The Regular grant has a maximum \$25,000 award and helps communities advance their urban forestry management programs. The Start Up grant has a maximum \$5,000 award and targets new or less-developed urban forestry programs. For 2010,

the Urban Forestry Grant Program funded a total of 61 projects, 14 of which were Start Up grants. Overall, 51 grant-funded projects had an EAB component and 24 of those involved the development and/or implementation of EAB readiness and response plans.

One example of how these funds assist with the development of an EAB Management Plan is the grant award to Sheboygan County. Sheboygan County is adjacent to Ozaukee County and just 15 miles from an EAB find; it seems likely that EAB will impact nearby municipalities. The Sheboygan County EAB Work Group began proactive efforts and identified the need for an EAB Management Plan. In 2009, Sheboygan County collected inventory data, and 13 tree inventory maps were generated that identified a total ash canopy of 23 percent. The tree inventory data, along with the 2010 grant funds, will assist Sheboygan County in its development of a comprehensive, county-wide EAB Management Plan.

In an effort to encourage development of supply and demand for diverse tree species and reduce repetition of the Dutch elm disease and EAB disasters, the grant program will only pay for planting trees from genera that represent 10 percent or less of a community's tree population. This must be backed by a community inventory or the DNR's statewide inventory numbers. Further information on the WDNR UF Grant Program is available on the WDNR Web site at <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/UF/grants/>.

### **Leadership and Networking**

On November 10, 2009, the WDNR, with cooperation from the University of Wisconsin and partner communities, launched the first Community Tree Management Institute (CTMI). Thirty-one municipal tree managers from across the State participated in the training program. CTMI is a unique, new program designed for municipal parks, public works, planning, or other staff responsible for public tree management. The CTMI training is geared toward tree managers who have minimal to no formal training and includes 26 different sessions over 5 days, concluding with a forestry operations field trip. CTMI builds program management and leadership capacity. Participants also completed an out-of-class forestry project suitable for their community. Participants completed the training on June 22, 2010. CTMI participants expressed appreciation for the course and acknowledge their time was well spent as the training continues to benefit them and the communities they represent. CTMI is tentatively scheduled to be offered again in 2011.



CTMI 2010 class participants and presenters pose for a picture.

Multiple tree planting initiatives were launched in 2010. Two of the largest are located in the Northeast Region. In a project called “First Downs for Trees,” the Green Bay Packers have joined with Brown County, area municipalities, the Oneida Nation, Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) Corporation, and the WDNR Northeast Region’s Urban Forestry Program to plant one tree in Brown County for each first down made by the Packers during their 2010 season. The Packers "Green Team," the green side of the famed “Green and Gold,” came up with the idea and worked with the WDNR and WPS to make it a reality. At a kickoff event June 30, 2010, at Skyline Park in Ashwaubenon in view of Lambeau Field, the Packers unveiled the tree-planting program, announced the Green Team’s goal that at least 300 trees will be planted in the spring of 2011, and then planted the first tree in the “First Downs for Trees” program. The “First Downs for Trees” project is an effort by the Packers organization to reduce the carbon footprint created whenever the team travels.

Another community tree planting initiative is the Oshkosh Taking Root Campaign. In 2009, the majority of participants in the Oshkosh Vision Survey indicated that they wanted to see a community with more trees, wider terraces, and unified streetscapes. The survey results provided the push needed to implement the “Taking Root” campaign. This campaign partnered the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and the city of Oshkosh to raise money to plant trees throughout the city. To date, more than \$350,000 has been raised and over 1,000 trees have been planted. Additional information is at <http://www.oshkoshareacf.org/funddocs/Taking%20Root%20Brochure%202010%20-%20Low%20Res.pdf>.

Community tree planting initiatives also occurred in the city of Sparta with support from Polar Bear International (PBI). The PBI donation is the result of the [Tree Planting for Climate Change](#) initiative and the partnership PBI has with the WDNR. Another tree planting initiative in the city of Wisconsin Rapids received support from its local Kiwanis Club. When needed, the UFWG staff work with the communities to encourage proper tree planting, species diversity, and long-term tree maintenance.

UFWG networking efforts continue to strengthen due to the numerous Municipal Networking Group meetings that took place throughout the State. These networking group meetings offer an excellent venue for municipal forestry personnel to learn first-hand the latest technical information as well as current urban and community forestry issues.



A nursery was the venue for one of the Municipal Networking Group meetings where Dan Krueger, Northwoods Nursery owner, explained rooting of a multistem serviceberry tree.

## Statistical Highlights

Managing and Developing Communities:	384
Population of Participating Communities:	3,126,630
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	15,104